



#### Birth and Death Records: Frequently Asked Questions

For legal questions about Texas vital records, please consult an attorney. For questions about ordering birth and death records online, see the [Texas.gov: Frequently Asked Questions](http://Texas.gov: Frequently Asked Questions) page. The questions and answers below address general information about getting birth and death records.

- **Who can request a certified copy of a birth certificate or a death certificate?**
- **Who is considered an immediate family member?**
- **How do I get a copy of the record if I am not an immediate family member?**
- **How can I order vital records from other states?**
- **What will you accept as a valid ID?**
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- **Why do I have to send a photo ID?**
- **Can you find my birth certificate for free and tell me if it shows the correct name? Will I have to pay just to find out whether you even have my birth certificate on file?**
- **What records are available?**
- **What do I do if I need a birth or death certificate to give to a foreign government (an "apostille")?**

#### **Who can request a certified copy of a birth certificate or a death certificate?**

For births within the past 75 years and deaths within the past 25 years, only the immediate family members to the person whose name is on the birth certificate or death certificate are eligible to request a copy. All those with any other relationship to this person must provide legal documentation, such as a court order establishing guardianship. If you are the legal representative of a qualified applicant, send us a release which documents a direct and tangible interest in the record you are requesting.

#### **Who is considered an immediate family member?**

Any of the following relationships by blood or marriage are considered to be immediate family members: self, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, and spouse.

#### **How do I get a copy of the record if I am not an immediate family member?**

You may send in a written, notarized statement signed by an immediate family member. The statement must give permission to Texas Vital Statistics to release a certified copy of the certificate to you. The statement must also identify you by your full name, and you must present a photocopy of your picture ID with the notarized statement.

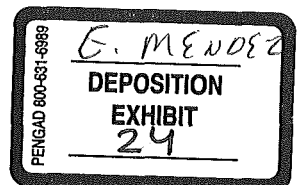
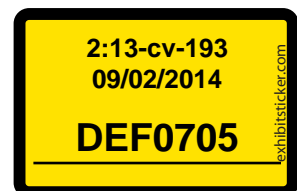
#### **How can I order vital records from other states?**

If you would like to request vital records from other states, visit the [National Center for Health Statistics](http://National Center for Health Statistics) website for more information.

#### **What will you accept as a valid ID?**

A photocopy of the applicant's valid government-issued photo ID. The following are acceptable forms of ID:

- State-issued driver's license
- State/city/county ID card
- Student ID
- Government employment badge or card



- Prison ID
- Military ID

**What if I do not have a photo ID?**

If the applicant does not have a photo ID, an alternative would be to send a photocopy of the photo ID of an immediate family member, who will then become the applicant. Another option is to send photocopies of two documents with the applicant's name, such as a utility bill, a recent paycheck stub, an employment or organizational ID, or a Social Security card. One of the documents must have the applicant's signature. Applications received without photo ID or acceptable alternatives cannot be processed.

**Why do I have to send a photo ID?**

Birth certificates and death certificates are not open records. Access to birth certificates is restricted to qualified applicants for 75 years from the date of birth, and access to death certificates is restricted for 25 years from the date of death. An ID is required to prove your identity and to prove that you are a qualified applicant.

**Can you find my birth certificate for free and tell me if it shows the correct name? Will I have to pay just to find out whether you even have my birth certificate on file?**

We cannot search records for free. Our fees are searching fees. They are not refundable or transferable, even if the record is not found or is identified incorrectly.

**What records are available?** Texas Vital Statistics can provide records for births or deaths that were filed in Texas from 1903 to the present. If you need a certificate for an out-of-state birth or death, visit the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) website for more information.

**What do I do if I need a birth certificate or death certificate to give to a foreign government (an "apostille")?**

See the [Apostille](#) page for instructions.

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